CONCLUSION:

AFTER READING THIS ZINE, I HOPE THAT IT'S CLEAR THAT
THE "OUTSIDE AGITATOR" STORY IS ONE THAT HAS BEEN USED OVER THE YEARS
TO DISCREDIT PARTS OF PROTESTS AND UNDERMINE SOLIDARITY.

A GOOD RESPONSE IS TO START SEEING THAT STORY THROUGH A CRITICAL LENS,
WHENEVER YOU HEAR IT BEING TOLD.

BUT AN EVEN BETTER RESPONSE IS TO ACTIVELY CULTIVATE
THAT SOLIDARITY THAT THOSE IN POWER ARE TRYING TO UNDERMINE....
THE SOLIDARITY THAT THEY ARE SO AFRAID OF.

THEY'RE NOT AFRAID OF WHITE DO-GOODERS COMING TO MOVEMENTS
OUT OF A SENSE OF CHARITY AND GUILT-ALLLEVIATION. EVERYONE KNOWS THAT
THAT FORM OF PARTICIPATION IS FICKLE AND PASSES LIKE A FAD.

NO, WHAT THOSE IN POWER ARE ACTUALLY AFRAID OF IS THE POTENTIAL
THAT PEOPLE HAVE WHEN WE REALIZE THAT OUR OWN STRUGGLES ARE INEXTRICABLY
TIED WITH THE STRUGGLES OF OTHER COMMUNITIES, AND WE ACT FROM A PLACE OF
COLLECTIVE STRENGTH. WHEN WE FORM MULTIRACIAL MOVEMENTS, AND WHEN WE
COMMIT TO DOING THE ANTI-RACIST WORK ON OURSELVES THAT IS NECCESSARY FOR
THAT MULTIRACIAL ORGANIZING TO FLOURISH.

THAT POSSIBILITY IS VERY THREATING TO THE RACIST POWER STRUCTURE.
IT HAS THEM SHAKING IN THEIR BOOTS RIGHT NOW.
LET'S DO THAT.

BY CMC
ANTI-COPYWRITE JUNE 2020.
WARNING: IF YOU REPRODUCE AND DISTRIBUTE THIS WITHOUT PERMISSION,
YOU WILL BE REALLY AWESOME AND YOU'LL BE HELPING MOVEMENTS FOR LIBERATION
AND THAT ROCKS SO YOU SHOULD DEFINITELY DO THAT PLEASE.

THE

OUTSIDE

AGITATOR

MYTH

CrimethInc.
@crimethinc

Divisive rhetoric about "white anarchists" in the #Minneapolis #GeorgeFloydProtests erases Black anarchists, whose voices should be in the center of these discussions. Here are just a few of them:

@black_autonomy
@anarchist_black
@BKANARKATA
@RevAbolitionNYC
@RAM_Philly

CrimethInc.
@crimethinc

No conspiracy theory could explain such a huge number of people revolting.

The police have killed so many people—for so long, with such impunity—that a critical mass of people are willing to risk getting killed to stand up to them.

These are not "paid protesters" or "thugs."

Mayor Jacob Frey
@MayorFrey

In the last few days, both our city and state law enforcement capacities have been overwhelmed by simple math — an overwhelming ratio of rioters that even our unified effort has been unable to push back.

BEFORE BELIEVING OR SPREADING STORIES ABOUT "OUTSIDE AGITATORS" PLEASE TAKE A SECOND TO CONSIDER HOW THAT PERSPECTIVE IS OFTEN BASED UPON (AND REINFORCES) THE THE WHITE SUPREMACIST IDEA THAT WHITE PEOPLE ARE MASTERMINDS, AND THAT BLACK AND BROWN PEOPLE ARE OVERLY-EMOTIONAL AND EASILY MISLEAD; THAT WE CAN'T THINK FOR OURSELVES, SO WE JUST FOLLOW THE LEAD OF WHITES.

THIS ZINE EXPLORES THE WAYS THE "OUTSIDE AGITATORS" MYTH HAS BEEN INVOKED TIME AFTER TIME TO DISCREDIT RESISTANCE, DENY THE EXISTENCE OF THE REASONS FOR ANGER, AND PREVENT SOLIDARITY FROM EMERGING AMONG DIVERSE COMMUNITIES WHO HAVE A LOT TO GAIN FROM REBELLING TOGETHER.

"THE CONVERGENCE OF A CLASS REBELLION WITH RACISM AND RACIAL TERRORISM AT THE CENTER OF IT."

YOU KNOW, I THINK PART OF WHAT WE ARE SEEING IS YEARS AND YEARS OF PENT-UP RAGE. MANY PEOPLE HAVE REFERENCED THE 1960S, HAVE REFERENCED FERGUSON IN 2014, BUT I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO SAY THAT THESE ARE NOT JUST REPEATS OF PAST EVENTS. THESE ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE FAILURES OF THIS GOVERNMENT AND THE POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT, THE ECONOMIC ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS COUNTRY TO RESOLVE THOSE CRISES, AND SO THEY BUILD AND ACCUMULATE OVER TIME. AND WE ARE WATCHING THE BOILING OVER OF THAT.

IMAGINE HOW ANGRY, DESPERATE, RAGE-FILLED YOU WOULD HAVE TO BE TO COME OUT AND PROTEST IN THE CONDITIONS OF A HISTORICAL PANDEMIC THAT HAS ALREADY KILLED OVER 103,000 AMERICANS, THAT HAS HAD A DISPROPORTIONATELY HORRENDOUS IMPACT IN BLACK COMMUNITIES. I BELIEVE 23,000 OR 24,000 BLACK PEOPLE HAVE DIED. TO PUT IT MORE BLUNTLY, ONE IN EVERY 2,000 AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES HAS DIED AS THE RESULT OF COVID. SO IMAGINE HOW DIFFICULT THINGS HAVE TO BE FOR PEOPLE TO COME OUT IN THOSE CONDITIONS. SO, I THINK THAT THE BUILDUP AROUND POLICE BRUTALITY, THE CONTINUATION OF POLICE BRUTALITY, POLICE ABUSE AND VIOLENCE AND MURDER HAS COMPELLED PEOPLE TO HAVE TO ENDURE THOSE CONDITIONS, BECAUSE IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THERE IS EITHER NOTHING THAT OUR GOVERNMENT CAN DO ABOUT THIS OR

CrimethInc. @crimethinc · May 31, 2020

Conspiracy theories about agents provocateurs circulate whenever protesters do things—good or bad—that exceed expectations.

Such rumors can obscure the more obvious things that are taking place.

They also serve to distract us from our own agency—from what we can do.

A thread.

CrimethInc.
@crimethinc

The chief danger of spreading speculation about provocateurs is that it will endanger those who take greater risks, because others (liberals, reactionaries, or people with good intentions) will try to "unmask" them as cops—and consequently expose them to more danger from cops.

89 1:11 AM - May 31, 2020

24 people are talking about this

THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS COMPLICIT AND CHOOSES NOT TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT THIS.

AND I THINK THAT WE HAVE TO ADD TO THAT THE CRISIS THAT IS UNFOLDING BEYOND POLICE BRUTALITY IN THE COUNTRY, AS WELL, BECAUSE WE ALL KNOW THAT THE VIDEOTAPES OF POLICE BEATINGS, ABUSE, MURDER HAVE NEVER STOPPED. SO, THE MOVEMENT THAT GREW OUT OF THE FERGUSON UPRISING, THAT BECAME BLACK LIVES MATTER, THE CONDITIONS THAT LED TO THAT NEVER ACTUALLY ENDED. AND I THINK THAT WHAT HAS REIGNITED THAT IS OBVIOUSLY THE PUBLIC LYNCHING OF GEORGE FLOYD ONE WEEK AGO IN MINNEAPOLIS, BUT ALSO THE CONDITIONS, THE WIDER CONTEXT WITHIN WHICH THAT IS SPILLING OVER. AND BECAUSE OF THAT WIDER CONDITION OF MASS UNEMPLOYMENT, OF THE DEATH THAT HAS BEEN CAUSED BY THE PANDEMIC, THAT THIS IS NOT JUST — I DON'T BELIEVE THESE ARE JUST PROTESTS AROUND OR AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY.

BUT WE SEE A LOT OF — HUNDREDS, IF NOT THOUSANDS, OF YOUNG WHITE PEOPLE IN THESE UPRISINGS, MAKING THESE MULTIRACIAL REBELLIONS, REALLY. AND I THINK THAT THAT IS IMPORTANT. SOME PEOPLE HAVE SORT OF DESCRIBED THE PARTICIPATION OF WHITE PEOPLE AS OUTSIDE AGITATORS, OR I KNOW THAT THERE ARE REPORTS OF WHITE SUPREMACISTS INFILTRATING SOME OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS. AND I THINK THAT THOSE ARE THINGS THAT WE HAVE TO PAY ATTENTION TO, KEEP TRACK OF AND TRY TO UNDERSTAND. BUT I THINK WE CANNOT DISMISS IN A WIDESPREAD WAY THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG WHITE PEOPLE, BECAUSE WE HAVE TO SEE THAT WHAT HAS HAPPENED OVER THE LAST DECADE HAS GUTTED THEIR LIVES, TOO. AND THERE HAS BEEN SOME DISCUSSION ABOUT THIS WITH PERHAPS THEIR PARENTS' GENERATION, WITH THE DESCRIPTION OF DEATHS BY DESPAIR.

SO, WE KNOW THAT THE LIFE EXPECTANCY OF ORDINARY WHITE MEN AND WOMEN HAS GONE INTO REVERSE — SOMETHING, BY THE WAY, THAT DOES NOT TYPICALLY HAPPEN IN THE DEVELOPED WORLD. AND IT IS DRIVEN BY OPIOID ADDICTION, ALCOHOLISM AND SUICIDE. AND SO, THIS GENERATION, WHOSE LIVES REALLY — YOU KNOW, IF YOU'VE GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE, YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN BRACKETED BY WAR AT THE TURN OF THE 21ST CENTURY, BY RECESSION AND NOW BY A DEADLY PANDEMIC. AND SO, I THINK WE'RE SEEING THE CONVERGENCE OF A CLASS REBELLION WITH RACISM AND RACIAL TERRORISM AT THE CENTER OF IT. AND IN MANY WAYS, WE ARE IN UNCHARTED TERRITORY IN THE UNITED STATES.

DEMOCRACY NOW! IS AN INDEPENDENT NEWS PROGRAM. SEE THE FULL PANEL DISCUSSION WITH KEEANGA-YAMAHTTA TAYLOR, CORNELL WEST, AND BAKARI SELLERS AT: WWW.DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG/SHOWS/2020/6/1

"NOTHING MAKES ME CRINGE MORE THAN HEARING THE TERM "OUTSIDE AGITATOR." WHAT IT IS, IS A COPOUT."

BAKARI SELLERS SPEAKING ON "DEMOCRACY NOW!"

JUNE 1, 2020

AMY GOODMAN: BAKARI SELLERS, I WANT TO ASK YOU ABOUT THE ACCUSATION THAT WHEN THEY LOOK AT A STATE, WHO ARE THE OUTSIDE AGITATORS WHO ARE COMING IN. YOU CERTAINLY KNOW, FROM YOUR FAMILY'S ILLUSTRIOUS HISTORY, THAT WHEN PEOPLE CAME FROM THE NORTH TO SUPPORT THE PUSH FOR VOTING IN THE SOUTH DURING THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, THAT TO GO FROM ONE STATE TO ANOTHER, FOR GROUPS OF PEOPLE ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, FOR EXAMPLE, TO GO TO FERGUSON AFTER MICHAEL BROWN WAS MURDERED BY A POLICE OFFICER, THAT THAT MEANT SOLIDARITY. IT DIDN'T MEAN THAT IT TOOK AWAY THEIR VALIDITY WHEN PEOPLE WANT TO GATHER TO SHOW SUPPORT. IF YOU COULD RESPOND TO THAT, THIS ACCUSATION OF OUTSIDE AGITATORS?

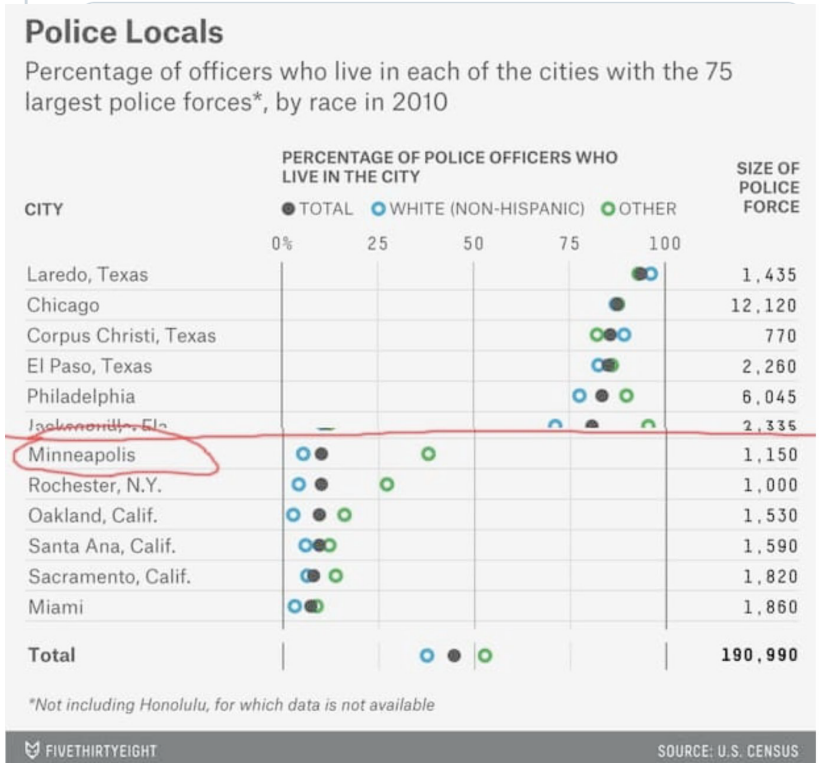
BAKARI SELLERS: SO, YOU BROUGHT UP A GOOD POINT. AND NOTHING MAKES ME CRINGE MORE THAN HEARING THE TERM "OUTSIDE AGITATOR." WHAT IT IS, IS A COPOUT. ELECTED OFFICIALS — AND WE'RE SEEING THAT USED TO SAY THAT MY OWN CONSTITUENTS DON'T HAVE ANY REASON TO HAVE THIS LEVEL OF DISCORD.

CrimethInc. @crimethinc · May 30

Replying to @crimethinc

Can all of the tens of thousands engaging in confrontational protest be from "outside"? To maintain order, the authorities need to portray rebels as "outside" the movement. But this movement began from open rebellion.

If anyone is outside it, it's the ones trying to divide us.



CrimethInc.
@crimethinc

Systematic police racism and murder have been taking place countrywide for generations. When people suffer from the same oppression everywhere, it makes sense for us to come to each other's assistance.

The word for this isn't "outside agitation." It is #solidarity.

A thread.

218 12:15 AM - May 31, 2020

83 people are talking about this

CrimethInc. @crimethinc · May 30
Yes, there are real divisions and differences in privilege within this movement. But if we enable authorities to isolate any one group of participants as "outside," this will ultimately serve to weaken the movement as a whole.

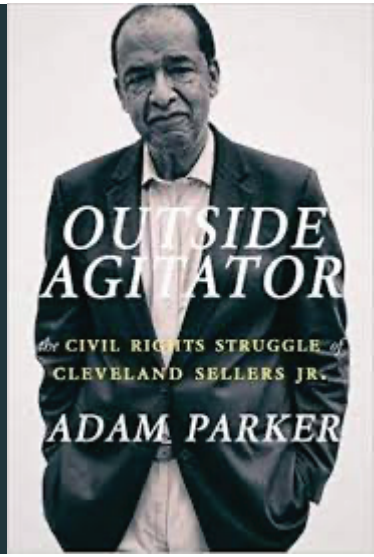
CrimethInc. @crimethinc · May 30
Let's care for each other, listen to one other, defend one other from risk rather than gratuitously exposing each other to it, respect each other's autonomy, give other participants in the movement the benefit of the doubt—and attack the institutions that murder and oppress.

YOU KNOW, THEY DEEMED MY FATHER TO BE AN OUTSIDE AGITATOR. THEY SAID THAT ANDREW GOODMAN AND MICKEY SCHWERNER AND JAMES CHANEY WERE OUTSIDE AGITATORS. SO, THOSE TERMS, THAT TERMINOLOGY, IT JUST FRIGHTENS ME TO MY CORE. BUT IT'S ALSO A COPOUT.

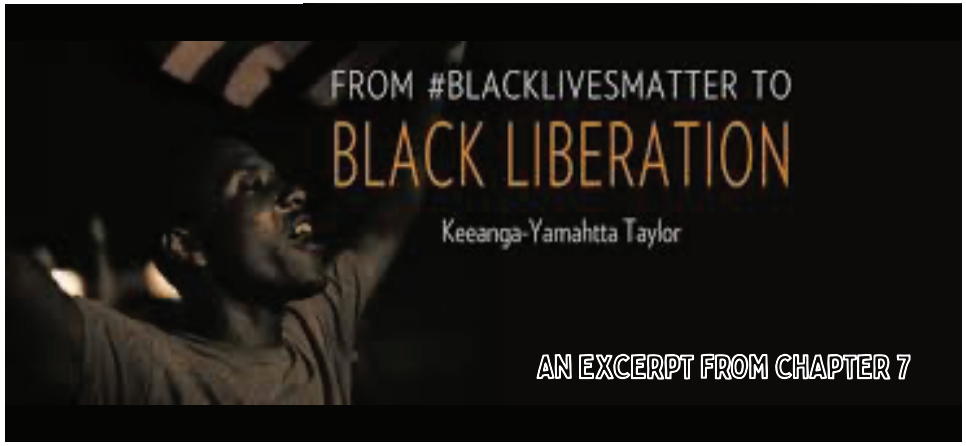
AND I WANT TO PIGGYBACK ON WHAT MY OTHER TWO FRIENDS ON THIS PROGRAM STATED, THAT RIGHT NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO JUST TELL PEOPLE TO GO HOME. NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO HIDE BEHIND SHEETS OF PEACE. AND NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO TELL PEOPLE JUST TO GO HOME AND WAIT UNTIL NOVEMBER WHEN YOU CAN CAST YOUR BALLOT. THAT'S JUST NOT THE WAY THIS IS WORKING. WE HAVE TO HAVE TANGIBLE SOLUTIONS, WHICH LEADS ME INTO THE NEXT POINT.

YOU KNOW, I'VE HEARD A LOT OF ELECTED OFFICIALS, INCLUDING, TO DR. WEST'S POINT, BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS, STAND UP AND SAY, "LEAVE THE STREETS, GO HOME, AND JUST REGISTER AND VOTE." WELL, IN `64, '65, '68, IMAGINE TELLING ELLA BAKER OR FANNIE LOU HAMER OR MY FATHER, CLEVELAND SELLERS, OR MARTIN OR MALCOLM THAT THEY HAD TO JUST GO HOME AND COME BACK WHEN IT WAS TIME TO VOTE. THAT`S NOT THE WAY THIS WORKS.

BARAKI SELLERS` FATHER, CLEVELAND SELLERS WAS ARRESTED AFTER THE ORANGEBURG MASSACRE OF 1968, WHEN POLICE OPENED FIRE ON A CROWD OF STUDENTS GATHERED ON THE CAMPUS OF SOUTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY TO PROTEST SEGREGATION AT ORANGEBURG'S ONLY BOWLING ALLEY. WHEN THE SHOOTING STOPPED, THREE BLACK STUDENTS WERE DEAD, 28 STUDENTS WERE WOUNDED. THE NINE OFFICERS WHO OPENED FIRE THAT DAY WERE ALL ACQUITTED. THE ONLY PERSON CONVICTED OF WRONGDOING WAS BAKARI SELLERS'S FATHER, CLEVELAND SELLERS, A MEMBER OF THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE, KNOWN AS SNCC. HE WAS CONVICTED OF A RIOT CHARGE AND SPENT SEVEN MONTHS BEHIND BARS. READ MORE ABOUT CLEVELAND SELLERS IN THIS BOOK "OUTSIDE AGITATOR" BY ADAM PARKER.



AN EXCERPT FROM "FROM #BLACK-LIVESMATTER TO BLACK LIBERATION", A BOOK BY KEEANGA-YAMAHTTA



THE BLIND SPOT OF CLASS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF PEOPLE LIKE TIM WISE NOT ONLY LEAVES THEM INCAPABLE OF EXPLAINING CLASS DIVISION AMONG THE OPPRESSED, IT ALSO UNDEREMPHASIZES THE MATERIAL FOUNDATION FOR SOLIDARITY AND UNITY WITHIN THE WORKING CLASS. INSTEAD, THE CONCEPT OF SOLIDARITY AND UNITY ARE REDUCED TO WHETHER OR NOT ONE CHOOSES TO BE AN "ALLY." THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH BEING AN ALLY, BUT IT DOESN'T QUITE CAPTURE THE DEGREE TO WHICH BLACK AND WHITE WORKERS ARE INEXTRICABLY LINKED. IT'S NOT AS IF WHITE WORKERS CAN SIMPLY CHOOSE NOT TO ALLY WITH BLACK WORKERS TO NO PERIL OF THEIR OWN. THE SCALE OF ATTACK ON THE LIVING STANDARDS OF THE WORKING CLASS IS OVERWHELMING. THERE IS A SYSTEMATIC, BIPARTISAN EFFORT TO DISMANTLE THE ALREADY ANEMIC WELFARE STATE. WHEN, IN 2013, 5 BILLION DOLLARS WAS CUT FROM FOOD STAMPS, IT HAD A DIRECT AND DELETERIOUS IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF TENS OF MILLIONS OF WHITE WORKING CLASS PEOPLE.

IN THIS CONTEXT, SOLIDARITY IS NOT JUST AN OPTION, IT IS CRUCIAL

THIS IS NOT OUTSIDE AGITATION. IT IS SOLIDARITY.

SO LONG AS WE UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEMS WE FACE INDIVIDUALISTICALLY, WE WILL BE POWERLESS AGAINST THEM. SOLIDARITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE MOST IMPORTANT TOOL OF THE OPPRESSED. THIS IS WHY THE AUTHORITIES GO TO SUCH LENGTHS TO DEMONIZE ANYONE WHO HAS THE COURAGE TO TAKE RISKS TO SUPPORT OTHERS. THROUGHOUT THE CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLES OF THE 20TH CENTURY, PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE CELEBRATED AS HEROES TODAY WERE TARRED AS "OUTSIDE AGITATORS." THE TERM HAS A LONG HISTORY ON THE TONGUES OF RACISTS AND REACTIONARIES.

FROM THE ARTICLE "THE MYTH OF OUTSIDE AGITATORS"
HTTPS://CRIMETHINC.COM/2014/08/20/FEATURE-THE-MAKING-OF-OUTSIDE-AGITATORS

TO WORKERS' ABILITY TO RESIST THE CONSTANT DEGRADATION OF THEIR LIVING STANDARDS. SOLIDARITY IS ONLY POSSIBLE THROUGH RELENTLESS STRUGGLE TO WIN WHITE WORKERS TO ANTI-RACISM, TO EXPOSE THE LIE THAT BLACK WORKERS ARE WORSE-OFF BECAUSE THEY SOMEHOW CHOOSE TO BE, AND TO WIN THE WHITE WORKING CLASS TO THE UNDERSTANDING THAT UNLESS THEY STRUGGLE, THEY TOO WILL CONTINUE TO LIVE LIVES OF POVERTY AND FRUSTRATION, EVEN IF THOSE LIVES ARE SOMEWHAT BETTER THAN THE LIVES LED BY BLACK WORKERS. SUCCESS OR FAILURE ARE CONTINGENT ON WHETHER OR NOT WORKING CLASS PEOPLE SEE THEMSELVES AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHOSE LIBERATION IS INEXTRICABLY BOUND TOGETHER.

SOLIDARITY IS STANDING IN UNITY WITH PEOPLE EVEN WHEN YOU HAVE NOT PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED THEIR PARTICULAR OPPRESSION. THE REALITY IS THAT AS LONG AS CAPITALISM EXISTS, MATERIAL AND IDEOLOGICAL PRESSURES PUSH WHITE WORKERS TO BE RACISTS AND ALL WORKERS TO HOLD EACH OTHER IN GENERAL SUSPICION. BUT THERE ARE MOMENTS OF STRUGGLE WHEN THE MUTUAL INTERESTS OF WORKERS ARE LAID BARE AND WHEN THE SUSPICION IS FINALLY TURNED IN THE OTHER DIRECTION. AT THE PLUTOCRATS WHO LIVE WELL WHILE THE REST OF US SUFFER. THE KEY QUESTION IS WHETHER OR NOT IN THOSE MOMENTS OF STRUGGLE, A COHERENT POLITICAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIETY, OPPRESSION, AND EXPLOITATION CAN BE ARTICULATEDTHAT MAKES SENSE OF THE WORLD WE LIVE IN, BUT THAT ALSO CHAMPIONS THE VISION OF A DIFFERENT KIND OF SOCIETY, AND A WAY TO GET THERE.

NO SERIOUS SOCIALIST CURRENT IN THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS HAS EVER DEMANDED THAT BLACK OR LATINO WORKERS PUT THEIR STRUGGLES ON THE BACK BURNER WHILE SOME OTHER CLASS STRUGGLE IS WAGED FIRST. THIS ASSUMPTION RESTS ON THE MISTAKEN IDEA THAT THE WORKING CLASS IS WHITE AND MALE AND THEREFORE INCAPABLE OF TAKING UP ISSUES OF RACE, CLASS AND GENDER. IN FACT, THE AMERICAN WORKING CLASS IS FEMALE, IMMIGRANT, BLACK, WHITE, LATINO, AND MORE. IMMIGRANT ISSUES, GENDER ISSUES, AND ANTI-RACISM ARE WORKING CLASS ISSUES.

EXCERPT FROM "A MASK AND A TARGET CART"

BY AREN AIZURA

APPEARS IN "THE NEW INQUIRY"
MAY 30, 2020

THESE DEBATES ARE ALSO NOT NEW. AS VICKI OSTERWEIL NOTES, NEWS MEDIA AND LIBERAL CRITICISM OF LOOTERS FOLLOWS ALMOST EVERY LARGE REBELLION, MOST RECENTLY THE FERGUSON PROTESTS IN 2016. AND NOW THEY ARE BEING REHEARSED AGAIN. PEOPLE ACCUSE PROTESTERS OF BEING "OUTSIDE AGITATORS," WHITE ANARCHISTS, PEOPLE FROM OUT OF TOWN, OR CRIMINALS. LEFT LIBERALS WORRY ABOUT PROPERTY DAMAGE MAKING THE MOVEMENT "LOOK BAD." AT MOMENTS LIKE THESE, A LIBERAL ATTACHMENT TO PREVIOUS MOVEMENTS AS PEACEFUL, NONVIOLENT, AND RESPECTABLE (REWRITING THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AS ENTIRELY NON-VIOLENT, FOR INSTANCE) OBSCURES THE HISTORICAL MEMORY OF RIOTS, BLOCKADES, AND LOOTING AS LEGITIMATE FORMS OF RESPONSE TO STATE VIOLENCE, OR EVEN ACTUALLY EFFECTIVE MODES OF REVOLT. WERE THE FREEWAY MARCHES MODELED ON "PEACEFUL" CIVIL RIGHTS ERA FREEDOM MARCHES AND MARTIN LUTHER KING, OR ARE THEY DRAWING ON HISTORIES OF RIOT IN THE MODE OF WATTS, THE RODNEY KING RIOTS IN LA, OR THE RIOTS OF BLACK AND BROWN YOUNG PEOPLE IN LONDON IN 2011 AFTER THE POLICE SHOT ANOTHER YOUNG BLACK MAN, MARK DUGGAN? IS LOOTING DEFENSIBLE? IS IT MORE DANGEROUS FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR TO ENGAGE IN CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, AND HOW DO PROTESTERS ORGANIZE TO PROTECT EACH OTHER IN THE MIDST OF CHAOTIC PROTESTS?

WHEN THE SOUTH HAS TROUBLE WITH NEGROES-
WHEN THE NEGROES REFUSE TO REMAIN IN THEIR "PLACE"-
IT BLAMES "OUTSIDE AGITATORS."

-JAMES BALDWIN

I, IDENTIFYING WITH A MAN WHOSE PHOTOGRAPH WAS NOT UNLIKE MY OWN REFLECTION, WONDERED IF PEOPLE WHO DID NOT SEE THEMSELVES IN OSCAR GRANT AT LEAST SEE IN HIS IMAGE THEIR FRIEND, THEIR NEIGHBOR, THEIR CLASSMATE, SOMEONE WHOSE LIFE WAS WORTH FIGHTING OVER. I HOPED THAT THERE WERE WHITE PEOPLE WHO, AFTER WATCHING A VIDEO OF A BLACK MAN BEING MURDERED BY POLICE, WOULD BE ANGRY ENOUGH TO BREAK WINDOWS. IN TIME, I MET THESE PEOPLE, BECAUSE THEY FOUGHT ALONGSIDE USE, THROWING BOTTLES AND CHUNKS OF CONCRETE, CURSING THE POLICE AND WRITING THE NAMES OF THE DEAD ON THE WALLS OF THIS CITY.

ONE ANSWER EMERGED IN MINNEAPOLIS IN 2016 WITH THE FORMATION OF A WHITE ALLY GROUP, WAKE YOUR ASS UP, WHICH SHUT DOWN I-35 ON JULY 13 DURING THE MORNING RUSH HOUR. WAKE YOUR ASS UP BECAME A COLLECTIVE OF WHITE PEOPLE AND NON-BLACK PEOPLE OF COLOR. BUT FREEWAY SHUTDOWNS ARE ONE THING; RELIEVING THE ENTIRE CONTENTS OF TARGET AND CUB OTHER STORES OF THEIR INVENTORIES AND SETTING MULTIPLE BUILDINGS ON FIRE MAY BE ANOTHER.

THE PEOPLE OUT RIOTING AND LOOTING THIS WEEK ARE YOUNG, MOSTLY BLACK AND BROWN PEOPLE. LIBERALS, MEDIA OUTLETS, AND CITY OFFICIALS MAY CONDEMN THEM AS CRIMINALS AND DENY THEIR POLITICAL AGENCY; THEY ONLY RECOGNIZE THE LEGITIMACY OF "PEACEFUL," ORGANIZED PROTESTS. YET THE PEOPLE OUT PROTESTING ARE POLITICAL AGENTS. THEY KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING. MANY OF THEM PROBABLY ATTEND OR ATTENDED SOUTH MINNEAPOLIS HIGH SCHOOL, THREE BLOCKS WEST AND ONE OF THE MOST RADICAL POLITICAL SPACES FOR YOUTH IN THE TWIN CITIES. SOUTH HIGH STUDENTS WALKED OUT TO PROTEST BLACK POLICE KILLINGS IN 2014, 2015, AND 2016, AND IF SCHOOL WERE IN SESSION RIGHT NOW, THEY WOULD DO SO AGAIN. SOUTH MINNEAPOLIS IS ONE OF THE MOST STAUNCHLY LEFT, AND MOST RACIALLY MIXED, PARTS OF THIS SEGREGATED, RACIST MIDWESTERN CITY. AT THE INITIAL MARCH ON TUESDAY, I SAW MANY MORE "ABOLISH THE POLICE" SIGNS THAN I HAVE IN PREVIOUS YEARS. "FUCK THA POLICE" WAS PLAYING EVERYWHERE. PEOPLE HAVE HAD ENOUGH. THE MARCH ITSELF WAS OVERWHELMINGLY COMPOSED OF BLACK AND BROWN FOLKS WHO ALREADY HATE THE COPS BECAUSE THEIR SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON IT. YET EVEN WHITE LIBERALS WERE HOLDING SIGNS THAT SAID, "FUCK THE POLICE".

I'M NOT WATCHING THE MAINSTREAM NEWS, BUT EVERYONE SEEMS TO BE EXPECTING THESE RIOTS TO GO ON FOR DAYS, IF NOT WEEKS. WE WANT THEM TO. IN THIS PANDEMIC, AFTER SO MUCH GRATUITOUS BLACK DEATH FROM COVID, IN TRUMP'S EERIE LIGHT WHICH REVEALS EVERY WHITE SUPREMACIST "BUG" OF THE NATION-STATE AS A FEATURE, PEOPLE ARE DONE. IN A STRANGE TURN, THE FACT THAT MANY PEOPLE ARE CURRENTLY OUT OF WORK OR NOT IN SCHOOL MEANS THAT PEOPLE CAN FOLLOW THEIR DESIRES TO RIOT, OR PROTEST, OR BE ON THE STREETS, FOR AS MANY DAYS AS THEY WANT. THEY HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE.

IN THAT SPIRIT, I CLOSE WITH A STATEMENT THE TWIN CITIES-BASED (AND NOW DEFUNCT) BLACK LIBERATION PROJECT WROTE IN 2016 (ON NON-VIOLENCE, ANARCHISTS AND THE MOVEMENT FOR BLACK LIVES). THEIRS IS A STATEMENT THAT IS WISE TO REVISIT RIGHT NOW:

"WE WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR WE ARE NOT IN THE BUSINESS OF FORCING NON-VIOLENT METHODS ON EVERYONE ELSE IN OUR ATTEMPTS TO GET FREE. WE KNOW THAT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR A PEOPLE TO BE CONSISTENTLY BEATEN, BRUTALIZED AND KILLED FOR CENTURIES WITH NO REPRIEVE AND THERE NOT BE VIOLENCE RECIPROCATED. WE DO NOT BELIEVE IN DISTANCING OURSELVES OR WORSE, AIDING IN THE PERSECUTION OF THOSE OF US IN THIS MOVEMENT WHOSE TACTICS ARE DECIDEDLY MORE VIOLENT THAN LIBERALS WOULD LIKE US TO BE, INCLUDING ANARCHISTS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ABSOLVING WHITE AMERICA OF ITS FEAR THAT THE CENTURIES OF VIOLENCE IT HAS INFLICTED ON US IS NOW BEING RECIPROCATED. THIS MOVEMENT IS NOT NON-VIOLENT. THIS MOVEMENT IS MADE UP OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WITH VARYING EXPERIENCES, VIEWPOINTS AND METHODOLOGY. SOME OF US BELIEVE IN NONVIOLENCE. MANY OF US DON'T. THERE IS NO ONE ORGANIZATION OF PERSON OR GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO SPEAK FOR ALL OF US. WE WILL GET FREE REGARDLESS."

THE FULL ARTICLE CAN BE FOUND AT "THE NEW INQUIRY":
HTTPS://THENEWINQUIRY.COM/A-MASK-AND-A-TARGET-CART-MINNEAPOLIS-RIOTS/

TODAY, WE FACE ENEMIES THAT WE COULD HAVE NEVER CONCEIVED OF BEFORE THIS. SOMETIMES, IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO PRETEND TO BE ON YOUR SIDE WHOARE THE MOST DANGEROUS ENEMIES. THE NON-PROFIT WORLD HAS, FOR EIGHTEEN MONTHS, WAGED A CAMPAIGN AGAINST THIS MOVEMENT. MANY NONPROFITS THAT FUNCTION INDEPENDENTLY OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT HAVE DISPARAGED US. THEY OPPOSE COLLECTIVE UPRISING AND SPONTANEOUS ACTIVITY BECAUSE THEY FEEL THE NEED TO CONTROL THE MOVEMENT. THESE ORGANIZATIONS VIEW THEMSELVES AS THE SAVIORS OF THE DOWNTRODDEN; WHEN DOMINATED PEOPLE RISE UP ON THEIR OWN TERMS, IT THREATENS THE POSITION OF LEADERSHIP THAT THESE ORGANIZATIONS OCCUPY IN THEIR IMAGINARY WORLDS.

WE HAVE ALSO COME UNDER ATTACK FROM NONPROFITS THAT OPERATE ENTIRELY UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT. ONE OF THESE CITY-FUNDED NONPROFITS HAS TAKEN UP A FULL-FLEDGED ASSAULT AGAINST US, USING SOME OF THE $2 MILLION IN CITY MONEY IT HAS RECEIVED TO WAGE A PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE UNITY THAT WE HAVE FOUND WITH EACH OTHER THROUGH THIS STRUGGLE. THIS NONPROFIT HAS EVEN USED CITY MONEY TO PAY YOUNG PEOPLE TO COME TO ITS INDOCTRINATION WORKSHOPS, WHERE THE ORGANIZATION SPEAKS OF THE EVILS OF PEOPLE COMING TOGETHER AND STANDING UP TO THEIR ENEMIES.

IT HAS ALSO HELPED TO SPREAD THE ABSURD LOGIC OF THE MAYORS OFFICE THAT ONLY PEOPLE BORN AND RAISED IN OAKLAND HAVE A RIGHT TO TAKE TO THE STREETS. THIS MICRONATIONALISM IS AN ATTEMPT TO FOSTER COLLABORATION BETWEEN DISENFRANCHISED PEOPLE AND THEIR EXPLOITERS IN A UNITED FRONT AGAINST THE ENIGMATIC "OUTSIDERS."

IT IS INCORRECT TO ASSERT THAT NONPROFITS OF THIS TYPE HAVE MOTIVATIONS OF THEIR OWN. THEY ARE SIMPLY THE HIP MOUTHPIECES OF A CITY GOVERNMENT THAT FUNDS THEM. THEIR AGENDA IS THE AGENDA OF THE MAYOR'S OFFICE AND POLICE DEPARTMENT. THEY USE THE LANGUAGE OF "PEACE" TO TRY TO PRESERVE THE INSTITUTION THAT CREATED THEM. WE HAVE NEVER BEEN CONCERNED WITH THEIR PEACE. THE PEACE OF THE POWERFUL IS A SILENT WAR WAGED AGAINST THE DISPOSSESSED.

IN THE PAST, OUR ENEMIES HAVE ATTEMPTED TO DIVIDE MOVEMENTS FROM DISTINGUISHING THE "GOOD" ELEMENTS FROM THE "DESTRUCTIVE" ELEMENT. THIS TIME, IT SEEMS THE PRIMARY DIVISION THEY CREATED WAS NOT BETWEEN "PEACEFUL" AND "VIOLENT" BUT INSTEAD A RACIAL DIVISION WEDGED BETWEEN GROUPS IN THE UNCONTROLLABLE ELEMENT IN AN ATTEMPT TO NEUTRALIZE OUR COLLECTIVE STRENGTH.

OUTSIDE AGITATORS

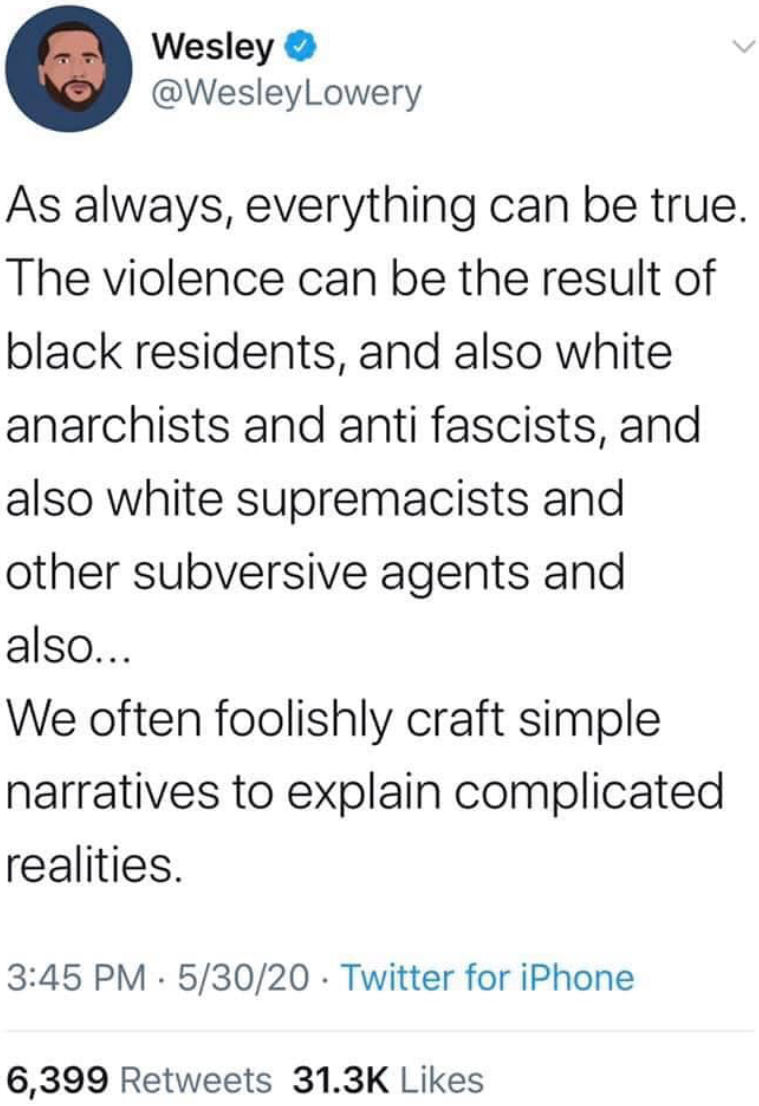
THIS FRAGMENT OF A LONGER PIECE BY J.B. WAS TAKEN FROM "YOU CAN'T SHOOT US ALL," PUBLISHED IN 2010 AS A PAMPHLET-SIZE MEMIOR OF THE OSCAR GRANT MOVEMENT IN OAKLAND. THIS INTERVIEW APPEARS IN TAKING SIDES: REVOLUTIONARY SOLIDARITY AND THE POVERTY OF LIBERALISM, A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS EDITED BY CINDY MILSTEIN.

WHEN THE SOUTH HAS TROUBLE WITH NEGROES- WHEN THE NEGROES REFUSE TO REMAIN IN THEIR "PLACE"- IT BLAMES "OUTSIDE AGITATORS."
-JAMES BALDWIN

THE TERM "OUTSIDE AGITATOR" WAS POPULARIZED DURING THE CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLES OF THE 1950S, WHEN SOUTHERN POLITICIANS WOULD BLAME THE GROWING UNREST IN EXPLOITED BLACK COMMUNITIES ON THE PRESENCE OF (OFTEN-WHITE) RADICALS FROM OUTSIDE THE CITY. PRESENTLY, IT IS A TERM USED BY OAKLAND POLITICIANS (AND ASPIRING POLITICIANS) TO TRY TO KEEP THE SITUATION UNDER CONTROL, TO PREVENT LOCAL MARGINALIZED PEOPLE FROM REALIZING THE POWER THEY HAVE.

NEVER AGAIN CAN WE AFFORD TO
LIVE WITH THE NARROW, PROVINCIAL
"OUTSIDE AGITATOR" IDEA.

-MARTIN LUTHER KING JR



ANSWER: LET'S START WITH THE "OUTSIDE AGITATOR" AS A WHITE NORTHERNER, ANARCHIST OR COMMUNIST, BEFORE WE GET THE THE QUESTION OF ERASING REBELLIOUS WHITE SUBJECTS. FROM THE EARLY DAYS OF CHATTEL SLAVERY UP UNTIL TODAY, THE OUTSIDE AGITATOR THEORY SUPPORTS THE WHITE SUPREMACIST NARRATIVE THAT BLACK AND BROWN PEOPLE ARE TOO IGNORANT OR LAZY TO REBEL ON THEIR OWN. EVEN IN THE DISTINCTLY BLACK REBELLION IN 1868 IN OGEECHEE, GEORGIA, WHERE THE BATTLE CRY WAS "NO WHITE MAN SHOULD LIVE BETWEEN THE TWO OGEECHEE [RIVERS]," PLANTATION OWNERS WERE TRYING TO SAY IT WAS RADICAL LABOR ACTIVISTS FROM UP NORTH IN COLLUSION WITH THE GOVERNOR WHO STARTED THESE REBELLIONS.

WE HAVE SEEN THE VARIOUS WAYS THAT THE WHITE, OUTSIDE AGITATOR MYTH WAS USED BY THE POLICE AND THEIR MEDIA SPOKESPEOPLE TO INFLAME INTERNAL CONFLICTS AND DELEGITIMIZE BLACK, ARMED REBELLION FROM FERGUSON TO BALTIMORE IN THE LAST YEAR. NOT ONLY IS IS ABSURD; IT'S RACIST AND DIRECTLY REIFIES THE COLONIAL NOTION THAT BLACK PEOPLE WERE PROVIDENTIALLY ORDAINED INTO SLAVERY. WHEN YOU DO THIS RESEARCH AND REALLY BREAK DOWN WHAT'S GOING ON WHEN PEOPLE EMPLOY THESE NARRATIVES, YOU REALIZE IT ISN'T JUST PROPAGANDA TO DISPARAGE ARMED SELF-DEFENSE, ARSON, AND RIOTS. IT ALSO STRIVES TO CREATE THE NOTION THAT ALL WHITE PEOPLE IN THESE REVOLTS ARE EITHER COPS, INFILTRATORS, OR OUTSIDERS WHO HAVE NO GENUINE REASON TO BE ANGRY. THAT THEN MAKES DEVELOPING ANY KIND OF ACTUAL AFFINITY ON THE GROUND- EVEN IF IT'S JUST SOME PRACTICAL SHIT LIKE WASHING SOMEONE'S EYES FROM TEARGAS- ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT.

CO-CONSPIRATORS

THIS IS AN EXCERPT FROM AN INTERVIEW IN MASK MAGAZINE WITH NEAL SHIRLEY AND SARALEE STAFFORD, COAUTHORS OF DIXIE BE DAMNED: 300 YEARS OF INSURRECTION IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH (AK PRESS). THIS INTERVIEW APPEARS IN TAKING SIDES: REVOLUTIONARY SOLIDARITY AND THE POVERTY OF LIBERALISM, A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS EDITED BY CINDY MILSTEIN.

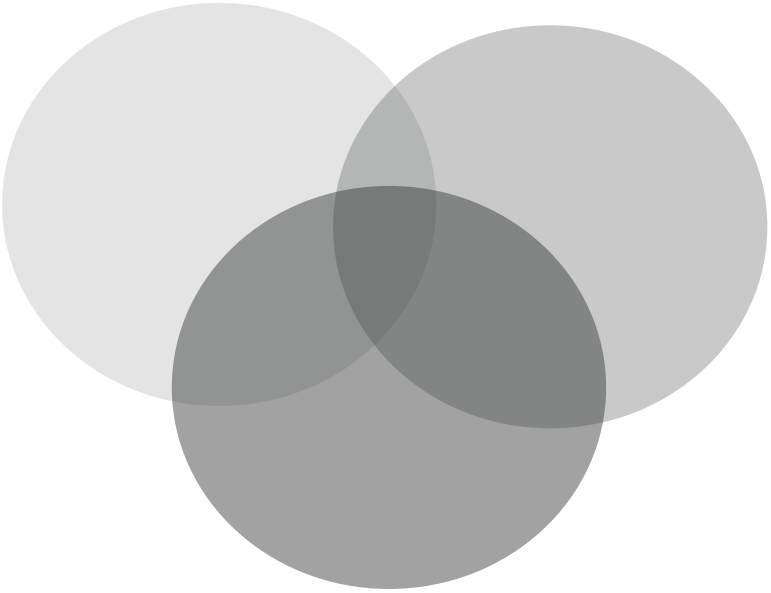
QUESTION: [YOUR] BOOK COVERS MANY CASES OF CROSS-RACIAL ALLIANCES, AND THE VARIOUS WAYS THAT POOR AND REBELLIOUS WHITE PEOPLE WERE MADE INVISIBLE OR ERASED FROM ACCOUNTS ABOUT UPRISINGS. YOU GO ON TO TALK ABOUT HOW RACE WAS CONSTRUCTED AS A WAY TO PAINT REBELLION AS A THREAT AGAINST ALL WHITE PEOPLE, THEREBY MISREPRESENTING THE INTEREST THAT POOR WHITE PEOPLE HAD IN THE SUCCESS OF REBELLIONS AND IN PARTICIPATING IN THEM. HOW DOES THIS OBSERVATION INFORM HOW YOU THINK ABOUT RACE, IDENTITY, AND REVOLT TODAY?

Tamia Smith (name changed for privacy)
May 31 at 10:47 AM ·

I see a lot of folks, including organizers of yesterday's protest, condemning the destruction from later in the night. I see folks beginning to thread the narrative that it was a whole other group. I think it's too simplistic to believe that thousands of people that marched left, and a completely different set of people came in. I was down there as the energy started shifting and it looked messier than that. There was not a clean distinction. And without being able to ask every person that broke a window or lit something on fire what their race is and what was their reason for destroying something, so we can decide if it was a justified thing to do, we all must sit in the tension described below and NOT let the theories distract us from the bigger reason why that protest happened in the first place. To be honest, GR feels so oppressive that I hope some it was us. I hope this wakes us up from the eerie, Stepford, fake, smile-on-my-face justice work that so often happens in our City. We tend to think GR would never get to that level. I include myself in this. But it did last night. Let's not completely dismiss the ability for Grand Rapidians to have rage and despair that reach a boiling point. Let's not forget the reasons behind that rage and despair. Let's not cling to simple narratives to explain this away and revert to the status quo.

THE TEXT ABOVE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY THE SCREENSHOT OF THE TWEET ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE. THE NAME OF THE PERSON POSTING HAS BEEN CHANGED FOR PRIVACY... BUT IT SEEMS RELEVANT TO NOTE THAT THE POSTER WAS A BLACK WOMAN.

MANY THINGS CAN ALL BE



TRUE AT THE SAME TIME.

MANY THINGS CAN ALL BE TRUE AT THE SAME TIME.

MAYBE YOU HAVE ONE OR TWO INSTANCES IN YOUR HEAD RIGHT NOW, AND YOU'RE THINKING, "BUT THEY PROVED THAT THIS ONE GUY WAS AN INSTIGATOR..." OR "IT'S CLEAR FROM THIS OR THAT VIDEO THAT THIS ONE GUY WAS AN UNDERCOVER COP."

THE POINT OF THIS ZINE IS NOT TO TRY TO CONVINCE YOU THAT THINGS LIKE THAT NEVER HAPPEN.

THE POINT OF THIS ZINE IS NOT TO TRY TO CONVINCE YOU THAT YOU WERE WRONG FOR EVER BELIEVING ANY STORY LIKE THAT.

THE POINT OF THIS ZINE IS NOT TO TRY TO CONVINCE YOU THAT MOVEMENTS SHOULDN'T TAKE THOSE POSSIBILITIES INTO CONSIDERATION.

THE POINT OF THIS ZINE IS TO GIVE CONTEXT AROUND THE LONG, OPPRESIVE HISTORY OF THE "OUTSIDE AGITATOR" NARRATIVE. TO SHOW THAT THE "OUTSIDE AGITATOR" NARRATIVE IS NOT SOMETHING NEW OR UNIQUE TO THIS SITUATION. AND TO SHOW THAT IT IS A VERY COMMON NARRATIVE INVOKED TO DELEGITIMIZE REBELLION AND CREATE DIVISION AMONGST PROTESTORS.

I HOPE THIS CONTEXT CAN BE ANOTHER TOOL IN YOUR TOOL KIT OF DISCERNMENT, AND I HOPE IT HELPS YOU WHEN YOU'RE NAVIGATING THE COMPLICATED TERRAIN OF SOCIAL UPRISINGS.